



# Montana Behavioral Initiative

A newsletter to support the implementation of Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS) in schools throughout Montana

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*"Have a short memory for mistakes, failures, and behavior slips. Every child deserves a fresh start each morning." - Robert Ramsey*

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When Finished Route To:

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Montana  
Office of Public Instruction  
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

opi.mt.gov

## Behavior Tips

### Behavior Tip—Pre-corrections are powerful

**Remind and Pre-Correct.** It really does make a difference if you remind kids of expectations immediately BEFORE they are expected to carry them out. Use positive language, that is, tell them exactly WHAT TO DO rather than what not to do. In pre-correction you are targeting the specific steps that they need to do that have been specifically problematic—not the whole list of things—and providing instruction, rehearsal, and checks for understanding right before the problematic context. Focus. And by all means, be brief, kids tune us out when we talk too much and we all have a tendency to use too many words.

### Behavior Tip—Modeling is powerful.

**Model the behavior that you expect.** The most powerful teacher is example. Model the behaviors you want to see children emulate. Yelling and shouting when you are upset with children's behavior teaches children to yell and shout **when** they are upset with someone else's behavior, including yours. Speaking disrespectfully to students teaches them to speak

disrespectfully—frequently providing actual words they can use later. If adults expect students to engage in active listening while peers are presenting information, adults should model active listening at this time, and on and on.

### Behavior Tip—Attention is prevention

**Provide lots of attention before problem behavior occurs.** When you suspect that a child violates expectations in an effort to gain attention, offer that attention before problem behavior occurs. We all need attention and attention seeking itself is not abnormal. Some children do not get enough attention and because they are not outstanding (in a positive manner) they learn very quickly that they can be outstanding in a negative manner. For these children it is often appropriate and necessary to provide non-contingent attention—attention that does not depend on them doing anything.

### Behavior Tip—Effective Praise

**Be specific with praise.** When commenting on a child's expected behavior, point out exactly what the child has done (or is doing) that is appropriate. Avoid general terms, such a "You are so good," or "You are

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## MBI...

- Benefits all students, and is not limited to any particular group
- Is based on effective behavioral practices, instructional design, and strategies
- Approaches behavior in a proactive way by teaching appropriate behaviors
- Fosters positive adult-to-student relationships
- Supports the local school continuous improvement process
- Is focused on improving academic achievement through creating safe, disciplined environments



*What is 4+ to 1- ?*

*Students should experience predominately positive interactions (Ratio of 4 positives for every negative)*

## Effective Praise

so mature.” Say instead, “Staying quiet means we don’t disturb others, that’s good for our community.” “Keeping your shoes tied makes you safe, and helps others be safe too.” “Cleaning up your table area shows responsibility and care for our school, thank you.” “Solving conflicts with words shows respect. A respectful school is better for learning, so way to go.”

## Behavior tip—Eliminate Humiliation and Sarcasm

**Never use sarcasm, attack a student’s character, humiliate, embarrass, belittle, or verbally abuse a student.** While these strategies may seem to be effective in the short term, they build resentment and anger in children and teach them that these are techniques that they should use when trying to get someone to do something. In the long run, these techniques are PROVEN to make problem behavior worse.

*Here is an oldie but a goodie.*

## Behavior tip— Compliment Club

Practice skills of social observation, language of noticing, and writing for detail. First the teacher spends several days giving compliments to individuals and to the class, modeling both patterns of language and how to notice particular behaviors. For example, the teacher might compliment the class for keeping the closet area neat. “I

noticed that the packs were hung on hooks and other items in the cubbies, and now it is easier for folks to find their things and protect them from damage.” After modeling this to the class, every Monday morning have students draw the name of a classmate or the teacher. During the week, their job is to look for good things. “Good things” are defined to include acts of sharing, kindness, accomplishment, and cooperation. By Friday, each child has submitted their compliment in writing. The compliment should include a specific event that was noticed (keeping coat area neat), a concrete action (hanging coats on hooks, items in cubbies), and a result (easier to find things, protection for belongings). Compliments can be read by the teacher or students and kept by the recipient.

This activity simultaneously works to improve observation skills, language and writing skills, discovering and explaining cause and effect, using details to support claims, and works to build community in the classroom. Also related to management and social skills, the activity offers practice in stressing the deed instead of the doer, important to conflict management and negotiation.

There are endless variations on this idea. Use a school-wide “Compliment Jar” to encourage students and staff to notice persons demonstrating the school-wide expectations.

Create “Put-ups,” one of which is read over the announcements each day.

Month(s)	Academic Year	Data	Who	Action
October-November	Current & next (future years as needed)	Team Implementation Checklist (TIC) Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) My Voice Survey (MV)	MBI Team School Staff Students	Enter results online Keep TIC, SAS, & MV for comparison/planning
January-February	Current & next (future years as needed)	Team Implementation Checklist (TIC)	MBI Team	Keep for comparison/planning Enter results online
March (earlier if desired)	Current & next (future years as needed)	SSARB, SSS or other climate survey	School Staff	Keep for comparison/planning
April-May	Current & next (future years as needed)	School wide Evaluation Tool (SET) Self-Assessment Survey (SAS)	MBI Consultant School Staff	Review report from consultant/keep for comparison & planning Keep for comparison/planning
April-May	Year 3 teams & beyond	SET or Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ)	MBI Consultant or team coach	Keep for comparison/planning Enter results online
May	Next & Future	Application for Recognition	MBI Consultant or team facilitator	Send to consultant/OPI

### Ideas for Immediate Implementation

#### ***Making Personal, Academic, and Social Connections with Students***

*From Mendler (2001), Connecting with Students*

##### ***Personal***

- Interest Inventory—personal index cards
- Smile
- Say good morning to each student you see
- Be at the door to greet students
- Send birthday cards
- Share yourself—Keep pictures of family and friends posted
- Ask an opinion of someone who rarely contributes
- Share thoughts—think aloud
- Positive paradoxical notes
- Allow students to borrow personal artifacts
- Be a chaperone
- Thank them for cooperating before they do
- Celebrate often
- Offer personal best awards

##### ***Academic***

- Take photos of students working
- Congratulate 3-5 students each class on something they achieved.
- Ask a non-participating student an open-ended question
- Respond to students (non-evaluative) at least 3 times per class
- Offer adequate wait time
- Consult faculty—looking for strengths and interests.
- Give humorous awards recognizing achievements—be careful
- Show students that they can overcome obstacles
- Create a class photo album

• Visit real or virtual places that you study

**Personal**

- Notice something and share
- Collaborate in service
- Establish predictability—involve students in developing rules and procedures
- Have students regularly offer suggestions about ways you could improve or help them “Give before you get.”
- Develop nicknames (double initial and acronyms)
- Call a student at home
- Phone parents w/ compliments
- Visit cafeteria and eat lunch w/disconnected student
- Rate feelings
- Apologize when you make a mistake or when it seems that you have
- Notice new or unusual behavior
- Show up at an event
- Notice absence
- Be protective
- Have fun together

**Academic**

- Make mistakes
- Be characters that you study
- Visit real or virtual places that you study
- Write a daily inspiration
- Specify learning goals and objectives
- Have students add personal goals
- Connect content with current issues
- Differentiate lessons
- Adapt instruction
- Offer opportunities to teach
- Use peer teaching
- Use technology to communicate
- Limit surprise quizzes
- Require students to reflect on what they learned.
- Use dialogue reflective journals
- Use a “parking lot” for questions and comments
- Give a rain check to postpone answering a question
- Learn with students
- Require students to respond to students—break the student-teacher-student-teacher dialogue
- State the purpose of homework—practice, application, analysis, synthesis

*Enjoy your copy  
of the MBI  
Newsletter*

**2013 MBI Summer Institute**  
June 17-21, 2013  
Electronic Registration Opens March  
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*Visit our Web site at:*  
[opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/  
MBI/index.html](http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/MBI/index.html)

**Social Connections**

- Problems and solution center
- Thank you center
- Compliment jar
- Play find “someone who. . .”
- Whole class service learning project
- Use think-pair share
- Ask for summary to promote listening
- Survey the class
- Deal with behavior from students not in your class
- Start a suggestion box
- Encourage students to help others with problems
- Teach problem solving
- Let students make some rules
- Allow students to change rule if they can offer an alternative that achieves same purpose
- Look for opportunities to get students involved in school matters
- Encourage complaint and suggestion letters
- Hold regular classroom meetings
- Use apologies of action
- Allow victims to decide reparations
- Have an “absence communicator”